

## LEARNING ABOUT THE MODAL VERBS

Modal verbs are auxiliary verbs used to express necessity, possibility, ability, permission, obligation, or intention. In English, the most common modal verbs are:

1. **Can:** to express ability, possibility, or permission
2. **Could:** past tense of "can," often used for polite requests or to express possibility in the past
3. **May:** to express permission or possibility
4. **Might:** to express possibility or uncertainty
5. **Will:** to express future intention or certainty
6. **Would:** past tense of "will," often used for polite requests or to express hypothetical situations
7. **Shall:** to express future intention or obligation, more formal than "will"
8. **Should:** to express advice, obligation, or expectation
9. **Must:** to express necessity or obligation
10. **Ought to:** to express obligation or advisability

These modal verbs can be combined with other verbs to modify their meaning and indicate various nuances in communication.

Modal verbs, also called modal auxiliary verbs, are used with main verbs to perform the functions shown in the table below. Study the table and complete the exercises.

Modal Verb	Function	Example 1	Example 2
Can	Ability Possibility Permission	I can speak Arabic fluently. We can go to Muree in December as both of us have a week off.	Can I borrow your pen, please? Can I borrow your book for a while, please?
Could	Past ability Polite permission Possibility	When I was in Eighth class, I could sing songs beautifully. When I was at school, I could run faster.	Could you pass the salt, please? Could you close the window, please?
May	Permission Possibility	You may leave the room now. You may leave the meeting before it ends.	It may be sunny day, so let's plan for tour. It may rain later, so be prepared for it.
Might	Possibility Uncertainty	I might go to the party, depending on my schedule. I might have left my keys at home.	She might not come to the meeting today. He might accept the application.
Will	Future Intention / Certainty Future Prediction Willingness	I will help you with your homework. According to the forecast, it will rain during the next week.	The sun will rise tomorrow morning. Prime Minister will address the nation tomorrow.
Would	Polite Request / Hypothetical Situations	Would you like some tea? If I won the competition, my parents would be delighted.	If I were you, I would take the job offer. Would you please accompany

			me to the market?
Shall	Future Intention / Formality	We shall meet at the park at 3 o'clock. Shall we work on it together?	Shall I open the window for some fresh air? I shall email the content tonight.
Should	Obligation Advice	You should eat more vegetables. You should eat a balanced diet for better health.	I should call my parents to check on them. All students should wear proper uniform to school.
Must	Necessity / Obligation Strong suggestion	You must wear a seatbelt in the car. We must finish the assignment before Wednesday	I must finish this report by tomorrow. You must always wear a helmet while riding a bike.
Ought to	Strong Advice / Moral Obligation	You ought to apologize for what you did.	We ought to respect our elders.

### Exercise 1

Following sentences are explained along with their time and function to understand how the model verbs work actually.

1. "Can you drive me to the railway station?" - This sentence is a request, asking if the person has the ability to drive the speaker to the railway station.
2. "Teacher might accept your apology." - This sentence expresses possibility. It suggests that there is a possibility that the teacher will accept the apology.
3. "You must buy the books in time if you want to benefit from the course." - This sentence expresses necessity or obligation. It indicates that buying the books in time is necessary if one wants to benefit from the course.
4. "Could you tell me the time please?" - This is a polite request, asking if the person is able to tell the time.
5. "David may arrive late." - This sentence expresses possibility. It suggests that there is a possibility that David will arrive late.
6. "The bikers must wear helmets." - This sentence expresses necessity or obligation. It indicates that wearing helmets is necessary for bikers.
7. "You should read this book; it is very interesting." - This sentence gives advice. It suggests that the person should read the book because it is interesting.
8. "Will you get the door please?" - This is a polite request, asking if the person will open the door.
9. "John will book the banquet for the function." - This sentence expresses future intention. It states that John intends to book the banquet for the function.
10. "Would you call back later?" - This is a polite request, asking if the person will call back later.
11. "You should see a doctor immediately." - This sentence gives advice. It suggests that the person should see a doctor immediately.
12. "We can drive or walk to the venue." - This sentence expresses ability. It states that the speaker and others have the ability to either drive or walk to the venue.

13. "You can buy these books." - This sentence expresses permission. It indicates that the person is allowed to buy the books.
14. "I can play this game." - This sentence expresses ability. It states that the speaker has the ability to play the game.

**Following passage has the use of modal verbs in bold fonts. Note how do they work in the passage.**

In the world of business, it's essential to adapt to changing circumstances. Sometimes, unexpected challenges **might** arise, and being prepared is crucial. For instance, a company **might** face financial difficulties due to market fluctuations. In such situations, leaders **must** take decisive action to mitigate risks and ensure the company's survival. Moreover, effective communication plays a vital role in resolving conflicts within the team. When disagreements occur, team members **should** engage in open dialogue to find common ground. They **ought to** listen to each other's perspectives and **might** compromise to reach mutually beneficial solutions. In this way, conflicts **can** be resolved amicably, fostering a positive work environment. Furthermore, in the modern workplace, continuous learning **should** be emphasized to stay competitive. Employees need to acquire new skills and knowledge to keep up with technological advancements. Employers **should** provide training opportunities and support professional development initiatives. By investing in their employees' growth, companies **can** retain top talent and stay ahead of the curve in today's fast-paced business landscape.

### **Exceptional Use of Modal Verbs**

Exceptional uses of modal verbs often involve their use in specific contexts or with particular nuances. Here are some examples:

1. **Can/Could for Politeness:** While "can" and "could" are typically used to express ability or possibility, they can also be used to make polite requests or offers. For example:
  - "Could you please pass the salt?"
  - "Can I help you with anything?"
2. **Might for Polite Suggestions or Offers:** "Might" can be used to make polite suggestions or offers, often conveying a sense of humility or deference:
  - "You might want to consider trying the new restaurant down the street."
  - "I might be able to assist you with that task if you need help."
3. **Shall for Suggestions or Proposals:** In formal or legal contexts, "shall" can be used to make suggestions or proposals:
  - "Shall we proceed with the merger as planned?"
  - "Shall we convene a meeting to discuss the new policy?"
4. **Should for Hypothetical Situations:** "Should" can be used to talk about hypothetical or imaginary situations, often in conditional sentences:
  - "If I were you, I should ask for a raise."
  - "You should have told me earlier."
5. **Must for Deductions or Conclusions:** While "must" typically expresses necessity or obligation, it can also be used to make deductions or express logical conclusions:
  - "The roads are wet; it must have rained recently."
  - "She's been working late every day; she must be under a lot of pressure."

These exceptional uses demonstrate the flexibility and versatility of modal verbs in English, allowing speakers to convey a wide range of meanings and nuances in different contexts.